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Adm Raborn Named as CIA Head

President Johnson has had a notable record of success in getting able men to serve in key posts of his administration. Rear Adm William F. Raborn, who has agreed to come out of his retirement of 18 months to succeed John A. McCone as director of the highly sensitive and vital Central Intelligence Agency, meets this standard.

The admiral, who quite incidentally was born in Texas, is best known as the man largely responsible for development of the Navy's Polaris missile system, including the submarines that carry these weapons. Before retirement, he was deputy chief of naval operations for research. He displayed his administrative and managerial talents in this position.

HIS STRONGEST qualification for his new job may have been stated by another retired admiral who said: "Red's the kind of guy who won't be distracted by nonessential details . . . He can really cut through the fog."

Fog is something which an agency like the CIA, perhaps necessarily, has a superabundance of. Yet the head of this agency must supply facts and make evaluations upon which the President must base decisions in critical defense and foreign policy matters.

No decision can be any better or any sounder than the information and judgments on which it is based. The head of the agency must be a man upon whom the President can lean heavily and with confidence.

IN THE COURSE of its operations, many of which are highly secret and involve espionage, the agency collects a tremendous mass of factual information, and it is necessary that the director not only be a man who can manage these far-flung operations but one with an incisive mind so that he can cut through all the mass of incidental or irrelevant detail and get

to the heart of a matter. Knowledge of and skill in the arts of diplomacy also are important. And, as someone has pointed out, so is luck.

Anyway, the new director of the agency has established a reputation as a man who can get things done, and that is something that appeals to the President. He is also said to believe firmly in subordination of military to civilian authority. One of the criticisms directed against the "super-spy" agency in the past has been that it sometimes has tended to make policy on its own instead of simply supplying the raw material for policy-making.

There is every reason to believe that the President has chosen a good man for this very important post.